

BOOTLEGGERS FORM UNION AND FIX PRICES IN OATMAN

It will remain a debatable question whether it is a union of a trust, but its own members call it a union. There will always be people, too, who will be uncertain whether or not this account of the initial meeting and organization of the Oatman Bootleggers' union No. 1 is intended as a joke, but the best way to get that idea out of your system is to make inquiry right now and it will soon be learned that the unions is no joke but a reality. When it becomes a great big central body, with branches and locals all over Arizona, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Maine, and all the other dry states, present and future, history will glance back and say that it was conceived and had its birth June 13, 1916, in the evening, at Oatman, Arizona, a great mining camp, 28 miles southwest of Kingman.

Eighteen bootleggers were present at the first meeting and a complete organization was effected. The meeting was held at '49 camp. In the interest of the members various questions of vital importance were discussed. One was to eliminate the unfair competition of scab bootleggers not regularly engaged, from those who have no other means of support. Inasmuch as the methods of the former are wholly unjust, which anybody can see at a glance, it was decided to boycott anyone, especially the "ladies" of '49 camp, if they patronized the scabs. If this fails of its purpose and worst comes to worst the walking delegate of the union will turn the scabs over to the officers of the law. Thus the moral support of the members of the bootleggers' union will be turned in the direction of uplifting the business by getting rid of a large band of parasites.

A more vital question to settle was that of prices. The liquor houses of Needles have shown an unappreciative attitude toward the very ones who have been their best friends, by raising prices out of all reason. They have even tried to ignore the fact that any regularly employed Arizona bootlegger is a dealer and have actually charged them full retail prices for bottled goods. As Oatman people know that retail price is 50 to 100 per cent higher than any place else in the known world. A bottle of whisky selling anywhere else for \$1.25 is sold to you at Needles—if you tell them you are from Oatman—for \$1.75 to \$2.25. Other goods are in proportion. The bootleggers who have tried to deal fairly and be reasonable with their customers have had this to contend with. They have also had "lots of truck" with the auto trucks and have been robbed right and left, top bottom and in the face of the drift. They have also to meet with a peculiarly unjust antagonism from the least expected source, persons who voted prohibition and drank when they felt like it. They say the only friends they have in camp are the prohibitors, who are not bothering them, but figure on the law enforcing itself. A vote of thanks was tendered to them for their inactivity and an amendment was added thanking them for bringing the business of boot-

legging into existence. Yet it costs a lot of money to carry on a thankless business of mercy in a land of undying thirst.

For these and many reason the bootleggers have been forced to fix prices, which they promptly did at their first meeting. To the "ladies" of '49 camp they have fixed this schedule:

Beer, 50 cents a pint.
Booze, \$2 a quart bottle.

Any "lady" in the camp who objects to these reasonable prices will be reprimanded by the walking delegate. For the second offense she will be boycotted. Boycotting means among other things that she will not be allowed to buy of any member of the union and for buying of a scab she will be turned over to the officers of the law, which fate will be meted out to the offending scab.

By unanimous vote the members have agreed to pay into the treasury of their union the sum of \$1.25 a week each. This is an insurance fund which is to be used for the protection of members who may be arrested for transporting, handling, having in possession, selling or delivering booze, beer, wine, alcohol or any of the long list boycotted by the Arizona constitution and statutory laws. It has no application to iodine, Peruna, vanilla and other extracts, or any of the articles containing 90 per cent and less of alcohol but used medicinally and for culinary department as distinguished from beverages.

Thus the state is assured of a run for its money when it starts a fight on any member of the bootleggers' union. The whole treasury will be at the command of the accused member and if it comes to that the treasury will be used to pay fines, put up cash bail and buy tickets to get over the state line until troubles blow over. The intention in the main is to stand and fight for the

rights of members, which the union will protect against the meanness of meddling officers and worse meddling citizens.

No decision was reached on the question of badges. It appears that the membership is so small now as to be only the barest nucleus of what it will be after a second and third meetings are held. Then it will be settled as to whether or not members will be required to adorn themselves to prevent confusion in the form of trying to peddle their goods to each other when they meet on the streets and highways. Where so many are engaged in the business it

is not to be expected that all know each other personally or by sight. The badge system is said to be employed satisfactorily in Tucson—Mo-have Miner.

A movie "impressario" says that baldheaded men can't be used for film work. Certainly not. They refuse to be taken from the front rows.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

The allies are meeting to plan an economic war on Germany. The latter will hardly appreciate this compliment of imitation in efficiency.—Baltimore American.

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